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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PARM](#) [KDEM](#) [KNNP](#) [ENRG](#) [SOCI](#) [IS](#)
IR, PK, AF, IN
SUBJECT: CODEL BIDEN MEETING WITH NSA NARAYANAN

Classified By: Ambassador David Mulford for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

¶1. (C) Summary. In a February 20 meeting with Codel Biden (consisting of Senators Joe Biden, John Kerry and Chuck Hagel), National Security Advisor M.K.A. Narayanan disclosed that GOI negotiations with the IAEA on the India-specific safeguards agreement are going well and he expects the agreement to be completed before the March meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors. Narayanan believes there is a 50 percent chance that the GOI will soon be able to finalize and approve the safeguards agreement, which is facing resistance from the GOI's Left Party allies. Responding to Senator Biden's question about India's strategic concerns in the region, Narayanan said the GOI views Pakistan's stability as crucial for peace in the region, regardless of who or what type of government is in control in Pakistan. The former head of India's domestic intelligence services pointed the finger squarely at Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency for much of the instability and uncertainty in the region. He said the key to stability in the region lay in someone reigning in the ISI. Warning that Pakistan faces a serious domestic insurgency, Narayanan cautioned that the Pakistani military is not capable of fighting it. He believes withdrawal of western powers from Afghanistan would be disastrous for the region and beyond. He is hopeful about success in Afghanistan if the Karzai government reaches out to integrate other ethnic groups and if the U.S. and the international community continue aggressive reconstruction and security support, choke off the supply lines for the Taliban, and restrain the ISI. On Iran, Narayanan was strongly in favor of engagement, noting that Iran will always remain a player in Afghanistan and the region. He believes the threat posed by Iran is less than is perceived in the West and is manageable. Narayanan noted that India enjoys a very good military and intelligence relationship with Israel. India has cautioned Israel that its aggressive military and intelligence operations have significant consequences in India with its large Muslim and Shia Muslim populations. End Summary.

Civil Nuclear Agreement: 50-50 Chance

¶2. (C) National Security Advisor M.K.A. Narayanan began the February 20 meeting with Codel Biden by referring to the proposed India-specific safeguards agreement with the IAEA as the "easy part." He expects the agreement to be completed in time for the March meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors, a target date that IAEA Director General El Baradei is pressing for. Narayanan believes that one more round of negotiations will be needed to conclude the agreement. He noted that the GOI and IAEA have tried to "confine" the safeguards agreement as closely to the 123 agreement as possible. They have also addressed outstanding issues such as assured fuel supply by including them in the preamble. A recent meeting in Munich with El Baradei helped clarify and resolve the issue of safeguards in perpetuity for indigenous reactors. The negotiators are currently trying to link the preamble to the text of the agreement, according to him. Once that is done, the agreement will be presented to the "holdouts" in India, he added.

¶3. (C) In response to Senator Kerry's query, Narayanan assessed the chances of the IAEA safeguards agreement being approved by the Indian side at 50 percent. While noting that the GOI does not need ratification of the safeguards agreement by Parliament, he observed that it would be difficult to sign the agreement if it is perceived to be against the will of the people as expressed in Parliament. He lamented that the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which he claimed was "secretly" supportive of the US-India civil nuclear deal, had for political reasons opposed it in Parliament. Had the BJP supported the agreement, the GOI would not have needed the approval of the Left Parties, whose resistance is grounded in their ideological opposition to the United States. Narayanan said that the GOI had gone the

extra mile to address the Left's concerns on the safeguards agreement and if they had a "reasonable degree of honesty," the safeguards agreement would "meet their approval." He claimed that the recent GOI effort to internationalize the issue by finalizing agreements with Russia and France had been helpful. He felt that the only objection that the Left Parties can now cling to is some language in the Hyde Act, which he believes is an excellent document that deals appropriately with the concerns of both sides.

ISI is the "Rogue" in the Region

¶4. (C) Responding to Senator Biden's question about India's strategic concerns in the region, Narayanan said the GOI views Pakistan's stability as crucial for peace in the region, regardless of who or what type of government is in control in Pakistan. Pointing to experience and knowledge gained over his 50 years of service in intelligence, he was firm in his view that the "rogue" in the region is Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency, which is behind much of the instability and uncertainty in the region. He claimed that no government in Pakistan had ever been able to check the ISI or "call" it for its actions. He regretted that even President Pervez Musharraf, who had both the understanding and the capacity to restrain the agency, had not done so. Noting that the U.S. intelligence community probably has better information, Narayanan accused the ISI of mentoring the Taliban, encouraging training schools for jihadists and allowing organizations such as the Lashkar-e-Janghvi to flourish. He specifically pointed to the existence of two training camps for suicide bombers that are attracting western recruits. He said the key to stability in the region lay in someone taking control of the ISI. Senator Biden noted that it has begun to dawn on Pakistani leaders that the terrorist infrastructure will soon turn inward and pose a threat to Pakistan itself.

Pakistan Army Incapable of Fighting the Insurgency

¶5. (C) Warning that Pakistan faces a serious domestic insurgency, Narayanan cautioned that the Pakistani military is not capable of fighting "anyone except the Indian

military." Senator Biden noted that the Pakistani officials agree that the military is not trained for fighting the insurgency. Narayanan also claimed that the Punjabi-dominated army is not willing to fight the Taliban and militant insurgents in the NWFP and FATA regions. According to him, the Pakistan military uses India as a "bogey" domestically but it does not really believe that India poses a military threat. As evidence, he noted a recent evacuation from the Indo-Pakistan border to Karachi of all Pakistani Air Force assets due to a terrorist threat.

Afghanistan: There is Hope

¶6. (C) Senators Biden and Kerry asked for Narayanan's views on whether it is possible to succeed in Afghanistan without leaving "a large American footprint." Narayanan responded that although the Karzai government is weak, has no capacity for supporting reconstruction and development on its own, and is probably not sustainable without external assistance, it does in fact enjoy legitimacy among its people. He believes that Karzai needs to reach out and more fully integrate Tajiks and Uzbeks into the government to avoid the appearance of Pashtun domination. He cautioned that U.S. and NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan would be disastrous as it would embolden the extremist forces. Narayanan observed that Indian intelligence is already starting to hear chatter in the lexicon of militancy about the defeat of the western forces in Afghanistan and the need to take the war to the crusaders. He advised that the U.S. should continue aggressive reconstruction and security support, choke off the supply lines for the Taliban, and restrain the ISI.

According to Narayanan, one of the most hopeful sights in Afghanistan is children in long lines on their way to school in the morning, an indication of how far the country has come since the Taliban era.

Importance of Engaging With Iran

¶7. (C) Senator Biden inquired about the advisability of engaging with Iran since there is some mutuality of interest in seeing a stable and Taliban-free Afghanistan. Narayanan supported the idea enthusiastically, saying that Iran is deeply concerned about Afghanistan and will always be a factor in efforts to stabilize the country. He believes that the Iranian threat to stability in the middle-east and Afghanistan is less than is perceived in the West and it is manageable. In his view, Iran is a country that needs to be "watched closely but a country that needs to be brought into the camp" rather than be shunned. Narayanan believes that the Iranian intelligentsia is becoming disenchanted with Ahmedinejad. He expressed admiration for a vibrant and assertive middle class. Narayanan noted that India maintains a dialog with Iran on several tracks. His principal interlocutor was Ali Laljani until he was fired from his position. A useful track that India hopes to develop is between Shia clergy in Qom and in Lucknow, in part because the Shia clergy has significant capacity to influence the population. Senator Hagel agreed with Narayanan on the need to engage with Iran, noting that Iran is a key player in the region and beyond.

¶8. (C) Narayanan claimed India has no intelligence that indicates that Iran supports elements of the Taliban. He conceded that Iran may from time to time support anti-NATO action in Afghanistan to "punch the western powers every now and then," something he called "hunting with the hounds and running with the hares." But, he dismissed any systematic support of the Taliban by Iran, in part, because they have a visceral hostility to one another. According to Narayanan, Iran defines its broad goals and ambitions through the eternal Sunni-Shia schism so it is not conceivable for Iran to team up with the Taliban.

Israel: Needs to be Less Aggressive

¶9. (C) Senator Hagel inquired about India's intelligence relationship and dialog with Israel and asked whether Israel-Iran hostility perpetuates political leveraging in both countries and beyond. Narayanan observed that India has a very good intelligence and military relationship with Israel and he has a vibrant dialog with his Israeli counterpart. He said that part of the dialog is devoted to encouraging Israel to moderate its very aggressive military and intelligence actions because such they have an immediate impact in India, which is home to the world's second largest Muslim as well as Shia Muslim populations. While recognizing the vulnerability of Israel and the unique threat to it, Narayanan said he has advised the Israelis that the consequences of their actions go far beyond its borders and its neighborhood.

¶10. (U) Code: Biden has cleared this message.
MULFORD